



In Touch South India

Headlines from the U.S. Consulate General Chennai



April – May, 2006

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Consulate Phone Number:

044-2857-4000

Consulate Fax Number:

044-2811-2020

Upcoming Films:

Crime Doesn't Pay (Bi-weekly Friday Films)

April 07

The Shawshank Redemption

April 21

Dead Man Walking

Sweeping Epics (Bi-weekly Friday Films)



May 5

Around the World in 80 Days



May 19

Doctor Zhivago

All films at 6:30p.m.
at Film Chamber Theater
Gemini Circle Chennai - 6

Seats on a first come first
served basis
Co-sponsored by
The Madras Film Society

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Our library — the AIRC — travels throughout south India reaching out to Indians in all corners of our district. Recently they paid a visit to Tirunelveli, in southernmost Tamil Nadu, to share information about our resources to what ended up being thousands of people. There was the AIRC Director, Jagadish Mysore (featured on page 4) with his 33 years of experience, meeting the needs



of Vice Chancellors, college students, business people and even some small children who showed up. Whenever the AIRC puts on a “road show,” people are amazed at the scope of our offerings, from the latest in business and management publications and DVDs, to the huge video library, and access to some of the world’s best databases. That’s not to mention the 15,000 volume collection. It all adds up to the best collection of resources about the U.S. in all of south India. Truly something for everybody. Looking through the rest of this issue it quickly becomes apparent that the AIRC is not alone in making that claim! —**Christopher Wurst, Editor, In Touch South India**



Springtime is upon us. In America springtime means Opening Day and the beginning of the baseball season, and I am pleased that this issue of “In Touch South India” includes an article about the so-called American pastime. A recent exhibition named “Baseball As America” that toured U.S. museums, including the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., declared, “Look to baseball and you will see our ideals and our injustices, our triumphs and our struggles. Since the sport first took shape in America, baseball and America have shared the same values, responded to the same events, and grappled with the same social and economic issues.” Indeed, as French-born American historian Jacques Barzun wrote, “Whoever wants to know the heart and mind of America had better learn baseball.” As American as baseball is, however, it also has become a world game. The first-ever World Baseball Classic that was played last month was won by the team from Japan, another country with a rich baseball tradition.

Happy springtime to all of our readers and, as is said at the start of every baseball game, “Play ball!”

—**David T. Hopper, Consul General**

“TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME”

American essayist Gerald Early once said that “when historians look back at American civilization 2000 years from now, Americans will be known for three things: ‘the constitution, baseball and jazz music.’ They are the most beautiful things Americans have ever created.” Whether or not Early was right, the U.S. Consulate has been busy championing all three in the past few months. Obviously the Constitution is something we celebrate every day. Jazz, on the other hand, was a special treat when the Rhythmic Prophecies quartet came to Bangalore in February (see “Positive Images” below). Now that baseball is on the map, we’ve completed Early’s trilogy.

Cricket may be the national pastime in India, but America’s national game—baseball—is slowly finding a place here as well. Nazim Fareed, the Secretary of the Chennai District Baseball Association (CDBA), became a baseball convert some years ago. “I find baseball to be faster than cricket,” he said, “and in only two and half hours you have a result!” The CDBA, under Mr. Fareed’s leadership, has been busy putting on baseball tournaments and conducting clinics at Chennai area schools. Last month the YMCA College of Physical Education, in Nandanam, had its first ever all-

school tournament, organized as always by Mr. Fareed. Deputy Public Affairs Officer Christopher Wurst had been invited as the chief guest for the tournament, but once there, talked his way onto the Year II Masters in Physical Education squad. The Year II’s, with the DPAO at shortstop, won the tightly contested tournament. The DPAO, in his valedictory remarks, talked about the recently completed World baseball Classic, with the obvious conclusion that baseball was no longer America’s sport, but a sport for the world. He challenged the next generation of Chennai’s Physical Education specialists to see to it that India was represented in the next World Baseball Classic, in 2009.



This may not be a huge stretch of the imagination. Fareed’s efforts with local schools and madrasses are paying off. Already a number of players

from Anjuman-e-Himayath-e-Islam have been mentioned as possible candidates for India’s National youth team.

Later this year coaches from Major League Baseball in the U.S. are expected to pay a visit, on a State Department funded outreach effort. So, just as Americans are learning to play cricket, Indians are starting to “play ball!”

Positive Images

Actress Suhasini Maniratnam inaugurates the Women's History Month film festival, in March.



U.S. Jazz quartet Rhythmic Prophecies during a two-night stand in Bangalore. The group, sponsored by the State Department’s American Music Abroad program, is seen here with legendary south Indian percussionist Udupa.

Students from Stella Maris College in Chennai doing a reading from an August Wilson plays. Chennai’s Public Affairs Section sponsored three Wilson readings at Chennai colleges to honor the late American playwright.



Dolly Simon (1929 – 2006)

Dolly Simon was a fixture in Chennai. As the AIRC Librarian she served for more than 30 years. She was also the longtime Secretary of the Indo-American Association in Chennai, an institution which helped promote Indo-U.S. relations. Ms. Simon was instrumental in establishing the Sister City link between Madras and Denver, Colorado in 1984. Under her leadership the association started and still oversees the annual Inter-Collegiate Debate competition on Indo-American topics. Her star program, Chennai's annual Martin Luther King lecture ran from 1981-2005, and featured many U.S. Officers. Twenty years later the first Gandhi Memorial Lecture was inaugurated in Denver, where Ms. Simon was again instrumental in encouraging the citizens of Denver to contribute to the Gandhi Memorial Fund. The Indo-American Association of Madras, mainly through the determined efforts of Dolly Simon--its passionate and moving spirit--succeeded in linking two cities with two great international peace icons.



... Q & A with Jagadish Mysore (continued from back page)

CW: How is new technology changing both the AIRC and libraries in general?

JM: Technology is only a tool for librarians; the task and role of the librarian remains the same – *Providing the right information to the right person at the right time.* The question is how effectively we make use of this technology towards achieving this end. With the coming of new technologies, the task of librarians has become more challenging. Many scholars have told me that the “internet is enough for their research and that is why they are not visiting the library these days,” but I tell them that they are wrong; a large number of useful and essential print resources are not available in the electronic format.

CW: Thank You

Consular Corner:

Consulate Listens to South Indian Multi-National Companies

On March 30, 2006, the U.S. Consulate General Chennai welcomed two hundred representatives from member companies in the Consulate's Business Executive Program, or BEP. The Consulate welcomes trade and commerce between the U.S. and India, and wants legitimate business persons to be able to travel with a minimum of delay and inconvenience. As a result, the Consulate provides expedited services for applicants from BEP companies. These companies are located in India and within the Chennai consular district, have a high volume of visa applicants, and meet the requirements of a rigorous pre-screening and approval process conducted by the Consulate.

While the Consulate has sponsored annual BEP conferences for years to effectively communicate with member companies, this conference marked the first semi-annual conference. The sharp increase in Indo-U.S. business relations simply demanded a higher level of communication between the Consulate and BEP companies, and the Consulate has responded with a series of individual meetings with member companies, as well as the additional conference. In addition, the March 30 conference welcomed Mr. Bill Bartlett, Consul General for India. Mr. Bartlett oversees country-wide consular operations from New Delhi, but made the special trip to Chennai to update BEP companies on developments in U.S. visa policy and answer companies' specific concerns.

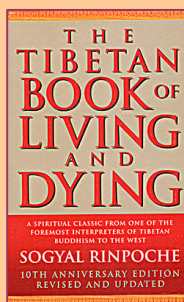
Apart from Mr. Bartlett's remarks, consular officers also answered member companies' concerns on topics ranging from returning employees with U.S. citizen children, how to determine whether employees' are clearly eligible for intracompany transfer visas, and generally how to manage applications in the new appointment system implemented last October.

“Outside of a dog, a man’s best friend is a book. Inside of a dog, it’s too dark to read.” (Groucho Marx)

Geetha Ganapathy
DRS Manager:

The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying
by Sogyal Rinpoche
First published 1992
Revised edition 2002.

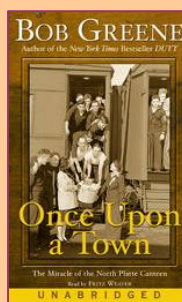
Sogyal Rinpoche delivers a lucid and inspiring introduction to the practice of meditation, to karma and rebirth, to care and love for the dying, and to the trials and rewards of the spiritual path.



Robert D. King
Vice Consul:

Once Upon a Town
by Bob Greene (2002)

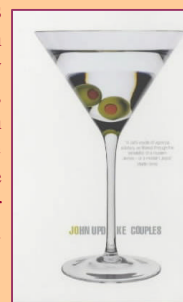
A charming bit of American history involving the railroad town of North Platte, Nebraska. Volunteers set up a track side canteen that met every troop train that passed through the town during the war, providing five minutes of sandwiches, cakes, pies and love to the troops headed to or home from the war.



Prasenjit Gupta
Vice Consul:

Couples
by John Updike (1968)

A book assailed for its frankness and praised as an artful, seductive, savagely graphic portrayal of love, marriage and adultery in America. A classic, it is one of those books that will be read--and remembered--for a long time to come. (Powell's)



Q & A with AIRC Director Jagadish Mysore

CW: How many people do you think have benefited from the AIRC in your 33 years here? Give us the math...

JM: At least 2 million people would have walked through the library doors in the time I have worked at the American library. We used to get more than 500-600 patrons a day and on Saturdays it would be more than a 1000. I have seen a large, large number of young students who used the library during my time, and are now leaders in their fields. The library gave them an exposure to the outside world which helped them succeed in the competitive world.

CW: As one of the longest serving members of the Consulate Chennai team can you describe some of the greatest changes you've seen in your time here?

JM: The library has changed with the times, but at any time, over the decades I have been here, it has given the impression to the people that they are in America. The changes have come especially in the introduction of technology. I had the privilege of seeing the first photocopier (which used to take a long time for one copy) and later the introduction of the first CD-ROM in 1985, which was exciting for all of us. The library was on two floors with separate sections for circulating collection, reference, and magazines. The collection ranged from 25,000 to 30,000 volumes, 300-400 magazines and other printed material. The expansion of the Consular section resulted in the current space for the library. Though we have fewer volumes now, electronic resources enhance our ability to access journals. An event which has become obsolete is the one hour ABC news program. Today we reach out to a large number of people in south India by organizing our popular AIRC Road Shows. One thing which has not changed is that the library has been a window to information about the United States since its establishment in the late 1940's. On a personal note, I too am a changed personality, firm and outgoing, compared to what I was when I joined the Consulate in 1974. I was an introvert and working with people both inside and outside made this change for my own benefit. Every day has been a learning day for me.

CW: After more than a quarter century here, what are the events that have made the biggest impression on you, and why?

JM: First of all, the large number of patrons visiting the library, especially from the '70s to first half of '90s. I used to

work at the circulation and reference desks during this period and the type of requests for material we used to get was amazing. This was a great on the job learning experience for me. The Golden Jubilee of the American Center Library is another event which I still remember. I had just taken over as the Director. I think I proved my abilities as a leader of the team which included not only AIRC staff but the other elements of the Consulate. The then-Governor of Tamil Nadu was the Chief Guest.

CW: Describe the AIRC and the services you provide.

JM: Resources are the primary factor for efficient service. Our excellent resources focus on American society and values, history, government and politics, economics, literature and address issues such as Indo-U.S. trade and economic relations, drug abuse and AIDS prevention, human rights, sustainable development, etc. We at the AIRC provide personalized service to patrons in south India. The services include borrowing of books, access to the reference collection, magazines, commercially subscribed electronic databases, multimedia CD-ROMs, internet, and the most recent English as a Second Language resource. We serve a large number of patrons from outside of Chennai. Our specialized services include reference services, selective dissemination of information, table of contents of magazines, and extensive literature searches on specific areas. In addition we provide material support for programs organized by our own Consulate sections and outside organizations.

CW: What are the greatest attributes of the AIRC?

JM: Instant Service. What I mean by instant service is that patrons are provided with the required and related information the moment we receive the request. The magazine section is still very popular. We have a group of experienced, very dedicated and professional staff. Service is the most important aspect of any library whether it serves the general public or people within an organization.

CW: What's the most valuable jewel in the AIRC collection?

JM: The jewel is the hybrid nature of the collection, comprising both print and electronic resources which help the staff to provide the type of service I just explained.

...continued on page 3

